

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 7664

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: SCANDAL CONTROVERSIES CONTINUE

REF: BA 7580

1. CONGRESSIONAL COMMISSION ESTABLISHED TO INVESTIGATE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY AND CRUZADA JUSTICIALISTA HELD FIRST MEETING ON NOV. 19. WITH ONE PERONIST MEMBER ABSENT, COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD ISSUE REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS FROM SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY, CRUZADA JUSTICIALISTA AND CENTRAL BANK. LATTER REQUEST INTENDED TO GIVE IT ACCESS TO PRESIDENTIAL CHECK OR CHECKS WRITTEN AGAINST CRUZADA ACCOUNT AND TO DISCOVER IF COMINGLING OF FUNDS WAS TRANSACTED THROUGH BANK. AT SAME TIME, COMMITTEE ANNOUNCED IT WOULD MEET DAILY, MAKE AVAILABLE AS MUCH INFORMATION ON ITS PROGRESS AS POSSIBLE AND ESTABLISH OFFICE IN CONGRESS AT WHICH CITIZENS COULD BRING FURTHER ALLEGATIONS OF WRONGDOING IF THEY SO DESIRED.

2. WITHIN 24 HOURS OF ITS FIRST MEETING, THE PERONIST SUPERIOR COUNCIL INFORMED CONGRESS THAT IT WAS THE PARTY'S DECISION THAT MAJORITY MEMBERS REFRAIN FROM ATTENDING FURTHER MEETINGS UNTIL CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE COULD RULE ON MERITS OF GOA MEMORANDUM ALLEGING THAT COMMITTEE INVESTIGATION VIOLATED SEPARATION OF POWERS DOCTRINE. WORD
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OF PERONIST COUNCIL DECISION WAS TRANSMITTED TO HOUSE LEADERSHIP

WHICH HELD CAUCUS NOV 20 TO TRANSMIT COUNCIL'S VIEWS TO ASSEMBLED CONGRESSMEN. THE MEETING WAS A STORMY ONE WITH MANY MEMBERS, INCLUDING SOME VERTICALISTAS, BITTERLY DENOUNCING COUNCIL'S DECISION FOR PLACING THEM IN POSITION OF "PARTICIPATING IN A COVERUP OF THE DIRTY WORK CARRIED OUT BY JOSE LOPEZ REGA AND THE VILLONES." ONE CONGRESSMAN ANGERLY DENOUNCED LEADERSHIP FOR HAVING URGED SETTING UP THE COMMISSION TWO WEEKS AGO ONLY TO PULL RUG OUT FROM UNDER PERONISTS NOW. THIS OUTBURST WAS MET BY LEADERSHIP'S ASSERTION THAT MEMBERS WHO COULD NOT GO ALONG WITH DECISION WOULD BE SUBJECTED TO SANCTIONS BY PERONIST DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE. ACCORDING TO SOME REPORTS, ONE PERONIST MEMBER ON INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE, CONGRESSMAN ARANDA, SAID THAT IF THIS WERE THE CASE, HIS CONSCIENCE WOULD FORCE HIM TO "RESIGN FROM COMMITTEE RATHER THAN ACCEPT ROLE AS PERPETRATOR OF COVERUP." PREDICTABLY, OPPOSITION WAS OUTRAGED BY THIS LATEST HEAVY-HANDED ATTEMPT TO SQUELCH INVESTIGATION AND WAS SHARPLY CRITICAL OF PERONIST COUNCIL DICTATE. IN ANTICIPATION OF OPPOSITION ONSLOUGHT, ONE PERONIST DEPUTY TOLD NEWSMAN THAT DECISION MEANT THAT "PERONISTS IN CONGRESS WOULD NOW HAVE TO GO AROUND WITH FACES AVERTED TO AVOID OPPOSITION COLLEAGUES' CRITICISM."

3. REPORTEDLY, DECISION WAS TAKEN BY COUNCIL AFTER MEETING WITH JUSTICE MIN CORVALAN NANCLARES AND INTERIOR MIN ROBLEDO. THEY TOLD COUNCIL THAT AS JUDGE NOCETTI FASOLINO INVESTIGATION IS MOVING ALONG AT RAPID CLIP, CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATION WITH ITS INEVITABLE FLOOR DEBATE COULD ONLY HARM PRESIDENTIAL IMAGE AND PERHAPS CONTAMINATE JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION.

4. WHILE PUBLICLY ACCPETING ROBLEDO-CORVALAN NANCLARES THESIS, COUNCIL MEMBERS AWARE THAT THRUST OF ROBLEDO'S MOVE IS TO SPARE MRS. PERON FROM FURTHER EMBARRASSING PUBLIC REVELATIONS, THOUGH PARTY WILL NOW RECEIVE MERCILESS ATTACK FROM SOME ELEMENTS OF PRESS AND OPPOSITION.

5. ACCORDING TO ONE WELL-INFORMED NEWSMAN, ROBLEDO HAS PLANNED FOLLOWING SCENARIO: GOVT WOULD GIVE EVERY SIGN OF PUBLIC SUPPORT TO ONGOING INVESTIGATION BY JUDGE NOCETTI FASOLINO. INDEED THEY WILL MAKE NO OBJECTION TO HIS SHORTLY EXPECTED ARREST ORDER FOR JOSE LOPEZ REGA, AND WILL GO THROUGH EXTRADITION PROCEDURES
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TO BRING HIM BACK TO ARGENTINA. ROBLEDO EXPECTS THAT SPANIARDS WILL REFUSE SUCH A REQUEST, AT WHICH POINT PERONIST PARTY WILL HEAP ALL MANNERS OF ABUSE ON LOPEZ REGA, PORTRAYING HIM AS THE ARCH-VILLAIN OF ARGENTINE POLITICS. THIS, ALONG WITH JUDGE'S PROSECUTION OF UNDERLINGS STILL IN ARGENTINA, WILL THEN BE PRESENTED AS THE PERONIST HOUSECLEANING WHICH OPPOSITION AND PRESS CIRCLES HAVE DEMANDED. KEY POINT IN THIS SCENARIO IS TO MAKE SURE THAT DAMAGE TO MRS. PERON'S REPUTATION BE HELD AT ABSOLUTE

MINIMUM.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY FINDS IT QUITE PLAUSIBLE THAT ROBLEDO
IN COOPERATION WITH NANCLARES HAS INDEED PUT TOGETHER
SCENARIO OUTLINED ABOVE, BUT DUBIOUS THAT EFFORT WILL ACHIEVE
ITS PRIMARY GOAL FROM INSULATING MRS. PERON FROM POLITICAL
FALLOUT OF THE SCANDAL-CORRUPTION ISSUE.
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